

Northwest Gardens of the Imagination

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Where in the Arboretum? Front Cover & Back Cover



Front cover: A gazebo bedroom in Bellingham (story, page 9). Photo courtesy of David McDonald (david@photogarden.com).

Back cover: The stone cottage, across from the Arboretum's Japanese Garden, has captured the imagination of children and adults since it was built in 1937. The 425-square-foot cottage was designed in England's Cotswold style by the firm of Loveless and Fey. It originally hosted Brian Mulligan, former director of the Arboretum, and his wife Margaret.

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The Arboretum Foundation is a nonprofit organization that was chartered to further Washington Park Arboretum development, projects, and programs through volunteer service and fund raising. Its mission is to ensure stewardship for the Washington Park Arboretum, a Pacific Northwest treasure, and to provide horticultural leadership for the region. This stewardship requires effective leadership, stable funding, and broad public support.

Washington Park Arboretum (WPA) is administered cooperatively between the University of Washington, its Center for Urban Horticulture (CUH), and the City of Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation. The programs and plant collections are a responsibility of CUH.

WPA is a living plant museum emphasizing trees and shrubs hardy in the maritime Pacific Northwest. Plant collections are selected and arranged to display their beauty and function in urban landscapes, to demonstrate their natural ecology and diversity, and to conserve important species and cultivated varieties for the future. The Arboretum serves the public, students at all levels, naturalists, gardeners, and nursery and landscape professionals with its collections, educational programs, interpretation, and recreational opportunities.



2 Woody Plants for the Tropical Fantasy Garden by Richard W. Hartlage

6 A Gardener's Lexicon: Ha! Ha! Folly in the Gazebo by Arthur R. Kruckeberg & Mary Robson

7 Where in the Arboretum? The Lookout by Christina Pfeiffer

9 Gazebo Bedroom on the Shores of Lake Whatcom by Stephanie Feeney



10 In the Washington Park Arboretum: Plant Names from Greek Mythology by John A. Wott

11 Where in the Arboretum? Zeus & Oaks

12 What in the Arboretum? The Web (Page) We've Woven

13 Enchanting Moments in Time: Christianson's Nursery by Martha Polk Wingate



16 Magic in the Details by Laurie Larson

18 Carpet of Bedding Plants—A Victorian Field of Dreams by Bob Lilly

20 Swan~Keeping on the Bloedel Reserve by Richard A. Brown

23 Scents & Scents-ibility by Scott Woodcock & Tom Berger

26 For Further Information: Gardens of the Heart & Imagination by Valerie Easton

27 *Perennial Ground Covers* reviewed by Mary Robson

Where you see this symbol, read more about Washington Park Arboretum.





Woody Plants for the Tropical Fantasy Garden

PHOTOS & TEXT BY RICHARD W. HARTLAGE

Fads in gardening come and go—some with great fanfare, others hardly noticed. The current trend of creating tropical effects in temperate climes is far too deserving to go without attention.

Some love the tropical style, and others hate it, saying that it feels out of place nestled among Douglas-firs in our maritime Northwest climate. But fantasy is a powerful thing, and many strive for that which is impossible. So ignore the misty gray skies, and indulge in sun-drenched tropical illusion.

The key to selecting plants for the jungle arena is big—big leaves, big flowers, big anything. Woody plants offer great possibility in achieving this look. They create the bones and setting for the cheap thrills of all those lush tender and herbaceous plants more associated with the jungle landscape.

I have always loved bold beautiful foliage, and one of the most stunning trees to carry it off is *Magnolia macrophylla*, bigleaf magnolia. Giant leaves to 2 feet are held in whorls on the loosely branched tree. The undersides of these huge solar panels are silver, and the early summer flowers are a staggering 18-inches across. This magnolia is a native of the Southeast and is an understory tree that will grow in the shade of Douglas-firs, if not too dark. My favorite time to see bigleaf magnolia, however, is in autumn. I even feel cheated if I do not get to see at least one leaf fall. The leaves do not drop with a plunk but sail to the ground like buff-colored hang-gliders. The tree ultimately reaches 30-40 feet, so if you have less room, try *Magnolia ashei*; it is thought to be a variety of *M. macrophylla* and grows to only about 10 feet tall with nearly the same leaf size and 12-inch flowers.

Scale is an essential element in any garden, and that is what we choose to emphasize with tropical fantasies. For height in the tropical garden, there is only one answer: Windmill palm and the once-fashionable monkey puzzle tree are obvious solutions, but stretch the imagination a little further with the lobed 1-foot leaves of *Firmiana simplex*, the Chinese parasol tree, and the large leaves of *Aesculus turbinata*—a horse chestnut needing full sun.



OPPOSITE PAGE: *Melianthus major* and the red flowers of *Leycesteria formosa* are combined with hairgrass and *Hebe* 'Quick Silver' to create a spectacular tropical effect.

TOP: *Catalpa bignonioides* 'Aurea' and *Dahlia* 'Fascination' growing in the garden of Linda Cochran, on Bainbridge Island, Washington.

ABOVE: Ben Hammontrec uses harlequin glorybower (left, in flower) with *Dicksonia antarctica* (Tasmanian tree fern, right) and windmill palm.

Firmiana simplex, from East Asia, is virtually unknown to gardeners. It is usually single-stemmed with Granny Smith–apple-green bark and 1-foot hand-shaped leaves. The tree often forms thickets if allowed to and will usually grow to 10 feet, though can reach 20. It would look great looming over a plantation of maiden grass—*Miscanthus sinensis*. Throw in a couple of windmill palms for good measure and for a real contrast of textures. Their great single heads of foliage above the finer *Miscanthus* would be a simple and striking effect. I envision a quarter acre, but two plants of each would suffice.

Another tree with visual mass is *Paulownia tomentosa*, the empress tree. I would treat it in a rather vicious manner by growing it as a cut-back tree. This is just as simple and easy as it sounds. Cut the tree down to a foot or so from the ground every year in early March to produce a very vigorous plant that will grow to about 10 feet by the end of the year with leaves over 18 inches across. Paulownias grown in this manner make great backdrops for all the fluff of big exclamation points to add a little drama. You could grow



catalpas in the same way with the same predictable results but might use the golden-leaved variety, *Catalpa bignonioides* 'Aurea', for a shock of color. A little acid yellow goes a long way.

Texture is important in the tropical garden.

TOP: *Weigela florida* 'Java Red'.

ABOVE: Ben Hammontree thinks big with the hardy *Musa basjoo* (left) and *Paulownia tomentosa*.

For coarse texture with the bonus of flowers, select *Clerodendrum trichotomum*, the harlequin glorybower tree, which reaches 15 feet tall. The foliage, when rubbed between your fingers, smells like rotten peanut butter, but the late summer flowers of white have a heavy jasmine odor that is intoxicating. In fall, magenta calyces later hold outstanding metallic blue berries.

Full sun or partial shade is fine for the harlequin glorybower; below add a collection of hostas for their large leaves, Rodgersias reaching to 5 or 6 feet with toothy foliage, and regal ferns to finish this lushly textured scene.

Color is another important component to this bold style of jungle planting, and I go for the strongest ones I can find. One of the truly gaudy is *Weigela florida* 'Rubidor', reaching up to 10 feet tall with shocking chrome-colored foliage. Red flowers make for a sizzling display in early summer and ensure that only the strong of constitution dare try to work this plant into their garden. For a truly glaring spectacle, create a backdrop for 'Rubidor' of *Robinia pseudoacacia* 'Frisia', in a slightly more golden hue, and a good-sized clump of the hardy banana, *Musa basjoo*. Or head to the other end of the spectrum for the darkest purple in foliage you can find without even leaving the genus. *Weigela florida* 'Java Red' is less vigorous but very sultry. For a monochromatic combo, add some black taro—*Colocasia* 'Black Magic'—with black lily turf and then throw in the hot pink dahlia with purple foliage, *Dahlia* 'Fascination'. That will get the blood going.

I did not like *Leycesteria formosa* until I saw it combined with the bold, toothy leaves of the evergreen *Melianthus major*. The foliage is not terribly interesting, but the flowers are quite odd enough to go with the tropical theme. Little burgundy chains of bracts appear in late summer, and I think they are stunning with the coarse steel blue of the honey bush.

Also try sumacs and willows along with *Aralia* (for the bold, multi-stemmed leaves) and *Sambucus*, as well as bamboo and eucalyptus. You could spend a lifetime on those two groups alone.

We create gardens so we can live in our own little piece of paradise, erecting a fantasy over which we have some semblance of control. Now every Northwesterner can have their own temperate jungle for gray skies.

Richard W. Hartlage is Director of the Elisabeth Miller Gardens, in north Seattle.



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A Gardener's Lexicon

Ha Ha! Folly in the Gazebo

BY ARTHUR R. KRUCKEBERG

✧ MARY ROBSON

The Bainbridge Island team of Little & Lewis are well-known for fantastic botanical sculptures, such as this. Photo courtesy of Stephanie Feeney.



Most fields of endeavor have their own vocabularies: Just listen to discussions by baseball enthusiasts, computer users, and politicians, for example. Over the centuries, the venerable pursuits of gardening and horticulture also have evolved or manufactured terms describing activities, things, etc.—all in addition to the botanical and common names of the plants themselves.

Especially rich is the roster of gardening terms. An honored and pleasurable human avocation, the words reflect their origins back to preclassical times. And now, at the end of the 20th century, gardening surpasses all other avocations, even outstripping sports, in numbers of devotees and of economic value.

So, it seems fitting to begin a column in the *Arboretum Bulletin* to define and explain the origins of the many words used by English-speaking gardeners and their ilk.

In keeping with the theme of this issue—the fanciful in gardens—we offer four words in the bizarre or exotic vein.

Folly

Not surprising, this comes from the Old French, *folie*, meaning “want of good sense.” Wealth and leisure unite in the production of a folly, a structure combining or exhibiting “eccentricity, cost, or conspicuous inutility” (Oxford, 1986). Cost was often justified by claiming that the structure provided work for the poor.

Garden follies can be structures of different types: grottoes, dovecotes, fountains, sham ruins,

At the Elisabeth C. Miller Library

Pergolas, Arbours, Gazebos, Follies.
David Stevens. London: Ward Lock Limited, 1987. This charming book contains numerous illustrations and much information about the topic of whimsical garden structures.

LEFT: A beehive gazebo with thatched roof and weatherboarded sides.





Where & What in the Arboretum?

The Lookout

The Lookout at Washington Park Arboretum was designed to provide a viewing point over Azalea Way. The stone benches provide a fine respite at this southwest edge of Rhododendron Glen. It was installed by the Work Projects Administration in 1941. The characteristic stone work and heavy timbers have withstood the years well. The old cedar shake roof gave way to the current steel roof in 1989 after repeated destruction of the shakes for “camp fires” on the gazebo floor. The view of Azalea Way to the north takes in the reflection pond and flowering cherries, including *Prunus incisa*, *Prunus* × *yedoensis*, and *Prunus serrulata* ‘Tanko-shinga’. The University District peers over the tree tops to the far north.



Looking down slope to the west is the *Amelanchier* collection, graced with delicate white blooms in spring, and intense scarlet fall color. The slope on the north side includes a very old planting with an array of dwarf conifers, spruces, and rhododendrons. The bottom of this slope is graced by a magnificent arboreal specimen of *Rhododendron auriculatum*.

Christina Pfeiffer is the horticulturist for Washington Park Arboretum.

stone circles, or towers. One Washington State example would certainly be the concrete “Stonehenge” at Maryhill above the Columbia River. Most popular in the early 18th century, the use of follies declined with simplification of landscape design after about 1750.

But who applies the name *folly* to the structure? The builder would require a sense of humor to do so, especially since another definition is, “Any fanciful construction in a garden which is there for appearance rather than for use.”

Folly is most likely to be applied to a structure by an observer, who determines that the whimsical, the odd, or the pseudo-classical deserves the term. Can we say that we build sensibly and that our neighbors construct follies?

Gazebo

This humorous formation on the word “gaze” where the suffix “-bo” imitates the Latin future tense (e.g., *vedebo* = I shall see; *lavabo* = I shall wash); thus gazebo = I shall gaze.

The Old English Dictionary defines the

gazebo as a turret or other platform on the roof of a house, usually for the purpose of commanding an extensive prospect; also a similar erection in a garden or a pleasure ground. For an Americanized version try: “a structure, as a pavilion or summerhouse, built on a site affording an enjoyable view” (Random House Dictionary). A synonym is a lookout or a belvedere (Italian).

The Arboretum has a stone gazebo, known as the Lookout, at the southwest end above Azalea Way. It has a view of Lake Washington Boulevard East. The Native Garden, in Point Defiance Park, Tacoma, also has a fine wooden gazebo.

Ha-Ha!

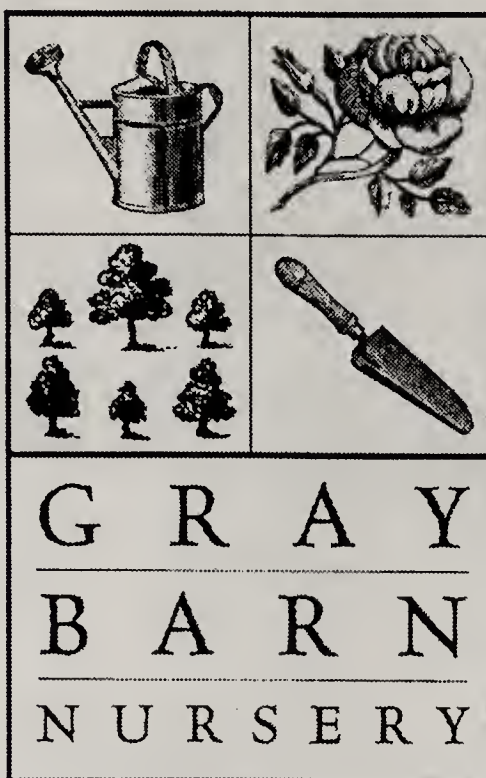
This garden term originated as an 18th century joke, a bit of a landscape deceit that might cause the unwary to exclaim, “Ah, ha!” A “ha-ha” is a ditch with a hidden retaining wall that often has a fence at the bottom to prevent cattle from straying into the landscape. Generally it is a garden or park boundary not



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seen until close up.

The term comes from Old French and expresses a range of emotion according to intonation: "joy, wonder, surprise, indignation" (Old English Dictionary). The unwary walker might tumble into a ha-ha, but the real purpose was visual, to carry the eye forward to the outer landscape unimpeded by walls or fence lines. This feature, first used at Versailles and brought into England by French gardeners, allows the borrowed view its best advantage.

Contemporary Northwestern garden ha-has are more likely to be unintentional, the residue of unfinished garden projects or holes caused by erosion.

Orangery

The orangery originally was "a place appropriated for the cultivation of orange trees; building or structure in which orange trees are treated and kept, where the climate does not allow them to be cultivated in the open" (Old English Dictionary).

In England and Scotland, they are adjacent to the house or other buildings; a particularly fine one is at the Edinburgh Botanical Garden. As heated structures, they allow for the survival of not only orange trees but other tender plants. In effect, the orangery is akin to the conservatory for raising non-hardy plants.

References

- Oxford English Dictionary (unabridged).
Oxford Companion to Gardens, Oxford University Press, 1986.
Random House Dictionary (unabridged).

Future columns will include "yard" versus "garden" "soil" versus "dirt," "bug" versus "pest," as well as your queries. Send word requests to Jan Silver, Editor, *Washington Park Arboretum Bulletin*, 2300 Arboretum Drive East, Seattle, WA 98112.



Create Your Own Orangery

The web site of the College of Agriculture, University of Saskatchewan, provides a history of the orangery. It also carefully explains how to make your own orangery, using four dwarf varieties.

<http://www.ag.usask.ca/cofa/departments/hort/hortinfo/plants/x-mas2.html>

Gazebo Bedroom on the Shores of Lake Whatcom

BY STEPHANIE FEENEY

PHOTOGRAPHED BY DAVID MCDONALD

Most gardeners remark that some of the sensual rewards of working among plants and the natural environment are the fragrance of flowers, foliage, and a newly mown lawn; the rustle of ornamental grasses; the taste treats of grazing the potager.

In our outdoor bed, my gardening hours extend into the blessed peaceful period before sleep. As I awaken to a view of Lake Whatcom, the garden takes on entirely new dimensions: The qualities of light are markedly different from anything I see during the day, and the crisp, cool air is very soothing. To see the garden in shadow and silhouette lends a perspective of simplicity and an appreciation of shape, texture, and mass. I observe and listen to a great deal of bird activity without the distraction and bustle of an agenda most gardeners bring with them to their daytime activities.

A particularly dramatic *Cornus elegantissima* 'Variegata' catches the moonlight and also flutters magically in a breeze. The silhouette of the tall wands of *Stipa gigantea* sway rhythmically and transmit light as a delicate gossamer bouquet. One early dawn in spring, my eye was attracted by the furious to-ing and fro-ing of a couple of robins building a nest in the clematis that adorns one whole side of our house. It was so well concealed that I would not have otherwise known of this secret hideout, except from the vantage of my bed. I was able to sneak a peek at the babies as they fed, then grew and left their protective lair. The two trees (60-footers) that traverse my shelter floor to ceiling are a fir and cedar. We've had to enlarge the openings to accommodate growth that the original gazebo carpenter obviously never imagined.

I love to burrow down within a cloud of fluffy comforters during a big storm, bringing back the excitement of childhood when little kids delight in being just a little bit afraid of Mother Nature's fury.

Stephanie Feeney is the author of *Gardeners on the Go!—Seattle* and *The Northwest Gardeners' Resource Directory*. Reach her at Cedarcroft Press: publisher@cedarcroft-press.com; (360) 733-4461; toll-free (888) 828-8891.



In the Washington Park Arboretum

Plant Names from Greek Mythology

BY JOHN A. WOTT, DIRECTOR

PHOTOS BY JOY SPURR

A tour through the Washington Park Arboretum

Use a map to plan your mythology tour of the arboretum. In each plant description below, is a locator number that corresponds with the arboretum map. Find a fold-out map in the book that lists all of the plants in WPA's collection, *The Woody Plant Collection in the Washington Park Arboretum* (\$9.95, available at the Graham Visitors Center Gift Shop). Free maps of the arboretum are also available in the visitors center; receptionists can help you map tours directly on this handout.



LEFT: *Rosa* x *Headleyensis*.
Aphrodite's birth was the
occasion for the earth to
produce roses. Find this
one in 33-6E of the
Arboretum.

TOP: *Lonicera ciliosa* is a
native honeysuckle from
British Columbia to
Northern California, found
throughout WPA's native
matrix.

ABOVE: *Clematis vitalba* in
August. Find it in 11-5E.

The language we use in everyday life has evolved over thousands of years. I remember, quite smartly I thought, reading German lessons to my grandmother, who had learned her German 80 years earlier. It was amazing how the dialects had changed. Having been a fan of history all my life, I find it fascinating how plants have been named, for better or worse. The history and folklore attached are sometimes more amazing than the names themselves.

Many plant names have their roots and early records in ancient Greece. In order to really understand this, we need to think about the life the Greeks lived. They were very much involved with their Gods, heroes, the nymphs in the meadows—all influences in their spiritual lives.

Almost everyone knows about Hippocrates and Dioscorides and their medical writings. But, the Greeks and Romans are credited with describing more than 1000 species of plants, an incredible record for that time. Many of their manuscripts were copied by monks and passed down during the Middle Ages, leaving a clear picture today.

Homer wrote that the Greek word *botane* meant “pasturage for cattle.” Later it evolved

to “weed, herb, plant.” Over the ages, a number of other associated words have grown from it, and certainly today, botany has come to mean the study of plants.

I would like to share with you some history regarding the plants and their names, using examples in Washington Park Arboretum. Most of these plants have a very long history and have gone through many dialects.

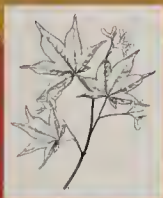
Paeonia (14-4E; 18-4E) was given its name long ago by the ancient Greeks to honor Paeon, a god of healing, and in Homer’s *Iliad* one of its first tributes was given:

As quickly as white milk with
rennet thickens

Likewise the blood in the wounds
of Ares became

Because of Paeon’s herbs.

Daphne, a river nymph loved by Apollo, was the daughter of the river-god Ladon. She was a shy, beautiful girl who found Apollo’s desire too pressing, so her mother Gaia changed her into laurel (*Laurus nobilis* [sweet bay], 21-3E). After that, laurel was considered sacred, to be used for purification.



Where in the Arboretum?



Zeus was god of the sky. As his tree was the oak, he had a shrine at Dodona in Epirus, “land of the oak trees.”

ABOVE: *Quercus alba*, white oak, is found from southeastern Canada to Florida. Find it in the arboretum at 37-1W and 43-2E, on the north end.

RIGHT: Athena borne from Zeus’s forehead.



After killing the dragon Python, Apollo, still wearing his laurel, washed in the valley of Teme. Then he entered Delphi as the conqueror covered with laurel branches, hence the term *laureate*.

Acer (maple), named after Ares, the god of war, was sacred to his companion, Phobos, a dreadful demon. The red leaves of autumn maple were said to have inspired fear in men (examples: 33-3E, *Acer palmatum* cultivars; 20-3E, *A. monspessulanum*; 21-3E, *A. sempervirens*).

Quercus (oak), was one of the most sacred trees to the all-powerful Zeus. It is reported that Zeus was consulted at Dodona beneath a sacred oak. According to legend, when the prayers of the believers were heard, the leaves rustled, the birds burst forth, and Zeus appeared (examples: 42-1E, *Quercus variabilis*; many on Foster Island and in the Pinetum, 36-, 37-, 38-5W).

Populus, such as the white poplar, *Populus alba*, is named for the two infernal gods. The dark underside represents the Underworld and the light side that of the living. Supposedly, Hercules returned from the Underworld wearing a crown of poplar twigs. He had just vanquished Cerbersu, the guardian hell-hound (*P. alba*, 34-7W).



What in the Arboretum? The Web (Page) We've Woven



Learn more about the Washington Park Arboretum on our easy-to-use web page. You'll find a lot of information about the arboretum, The Arboretum Foundation, and links to other relevant sites.

Take a virtual tour, and see Joy Spurr's outstanding photos of the arboretum throughout the year. Call up the seasonal highlights, by month, if you choose. Find out more about educational programs offered to the public or how to rent the facilities. Those who wish to become more involved can peruse an entire section on the benefits and activities of volunteers.
<http://weber.us.washington.edu/~wpa/>

Fraxinus (ash) is the wood from which men are made, according to Hesiod. Melia, the old name of this plant, is supposed to remind us of the Melian nymphs, the protector of the flocks. On at least four occasions, Homer refers to the ash as being very hard wood for weapons (23- and 24-4W).

Vitex (chaste tree) is one of the most celebrated trees of Antiquity. When Prometheus was delivered from his suffering by Hercules or Chron, he gained great strength after donning a wreath of *Vitex*. During the annual festival in honor of Demeter, the women would lay on couches made from its branches in order to affirm their chastity. The chaste tree also lined the entrance to the temple of Zeus at Dodona (32-1W).

Rosa is mentioned in many ways throughout Greek legends. Ovid makes it grow from a drop of Adonis's blood. The Greek lyric poet Anacreon called it "the perfume of the gods, the joy of men," and said that when Aphrodite was born, the earth produced this flower of many colors (32- and 33-6E).

Styrax (snowbell) is said to have originated in Crete. Herodotus mentioned that its perfumed resin was burned to "drive off the flying snakes" (i.e., locusts) from the frankincense trees (9-7E, 11-7E, *Styrax officianale*; 19-1W, *S. japonicum*).

Cydonia or quince was already known in Homer's time. Dedicated to Aphrodite, it symbolized love and was eaten by young newlyweds during their wedding ceremony. Newlyweds visiting the arboretum may proceed directly to *Pseudocydonia sinensis* (Chinese quince; 32-5W, 37-3W).

John A. Wott is the Director, Washington Park Arboretum.

Reference

Bauman, Helmut. *The Greek Plant World in Myth, Art and Literature* [English translation]. Portland, OR: Timber Press, 1993.



Carrots, roses, and rhubarb grow together comfortably at Mole's End, in the 1997 Northwest Flower & Garden Show.

Enchanting Moments in Time

BY MARTHA POLK WINGATE

PHOTOS, COURTESY OF DAVID MCDONALD, NORTHWEST FLOWER & GARDEN SHOW

Do you still remember Grandmother's garden? The picket fence, slightly askew, could barely contain the bounty within. In spring, clumps of narcissus occupied every corner. Carefully bought from mail-order catalogs or passed along from friends' divisions, they jostled with fading crocus for space and came up through the grass, which was green but long and flopped over. Late spring, the *Spiraea* showered its white snowflakes over everything as it settled down to an unassuming green presence for the rest of the year. Suddenly, the *Clematis montana* was everywhere up the downspout and across the front of the porch, masses of pink blooms putting their best face forward. On a nearby arbor, a Lady Banks rose is heavy with yellow buds.

And where was Grandmother's garden? Down South? Back East? Did it look just like an English cottage garden? Or was it at the Northwest Flower & Garden Show?

"Our gardens are really both nostalgic and English," says John Christianson of his nursery's award-winning entries in Seattle's answer to Chelsea. "Because if anyone has memories of Grandmother's garden—and most of us have—they are not actual memories of our grandmothers' gardens. I think *that* generation is past; many grandmothers today had gardens in the 1950s and 1960s, and those are not the grandmothers that people are thinking about." (*continued*, page 14)

John and Toni Christianson have let their imagination run away with them four times at the Northwest Flower & Garden Show, and in return they have been showered with awards, praise, and the love of tens of thousands of gardeners. Their garden fantasies grow out of their love for that English look of perennials and boxwood. "They definitely do have that feel of the gardens of Gertrude Jekyll, of the 1890s through the 1920s and '30s," says John Christianson.

Toni Christianson is the creative force behind the design. "Toni has remarkable ideas that are quite often unrealistic" notes her husband. "Then we try to create her ideas." Apparently with much success.

"A Sunday's Afternoon" (right), a garden of a mere 300 square feet, won the People's Choice award at the 1993 show; it was entered under the name of Hart's Nursery (the former owner from whom the Christiansons bought the 7-acre nursery in 1990 before changing the name in late 1993).

The Victorian cottage, with its comfortably overgrown garden, even included a hedgerow, and enraptured viewers stood 10 deep to catch a glimpse. "That garden probably tapped into people's emotions more than any other," says John Christianson. "We actually had people crying."

It is a look that is continued in the nursery. "We have this charmed setting," says Christianson. "In the spring, we have 80 acres of daffodils across the street, 600 acres of tulips on the other side, and we're looking across thousands of acres of farmland to Mount Baker and the Cascades. You just don't get that setting everywhere."

Visitors throughout the year stop at the nursery on the way to or from nearby La Conner, creating an entire delightful day, not just a rush trip to grab another rhododendron.

"We specialize in uncommon plants—lots of herbaceous perennials and own-root roses, over 750 varieties." Nursery displays built to sell still give off the comfortable, country feeling of Grandmother's cottage. Tables are loaded with pots, including new cultivars from local growers, such as *Geum rivale* 'Coppertone', or unnamed lilacs in double white and dark plum. It is the nursery version of pass-along plants.

A wicker picnic basket sat open and inviting under a twig gazebo in 1994. "Enchanted April" won the Founder's Cup at the flower show, as gardeners and judges alike were drawn into the inviting scene of green and white Solomon's seal, weeping cherry, and tulips—with moss dripping over the steps.

And in 1997, a well-worn potting shed, greenhouse, and tiny allotment garden spoke to all who want the fruits of their labor to be in rhubarb as well as roses. "Mole's End" told the story of a family allotment, the British version of a Northwest P-Patch, where each weekend the whole family worked. A stack of overturned terra-cotta pots, an old watering can, a pot of geraniums, and



lunch spread out on the well-worn grass struck another common chord of memory in gardeners. Don't we know that place?

"We happen to be in a region that is full of attractive resources to draw from for designs and materials," says Christianson. "Mainly it's still very agricultural around here with lots of old granaries, farms, and sheds. We can utilize these materials because they're always falling down around everywhere. The challenge is to translate a 40-acre inspiring scene into a 300-square-foot garden." It is a challenge that Toni Christianson takes to heart as she translated this inspiration to the interior of the Washington State Convention and Trade Center and won, once again, the People's Choice award.

The nursery itself, set among the fields of the Skagit Valley, is a little like an enlarged "Mole's End." Layers of life are on display. One growing house was built with concrete tables during World War II when lumber was needed elsewhere. The owners may have thought it an inconvenience then to build huge, heavy concrete slabs, but they have lasted for 50 years and look to last for at least 50 more. The old schoolhouse is another remnant of the past that seems perfectly at home in the nursery. An 1888 territorial building, the schoolhouse was designed to temporarily accommodate the growing Northwest student population. Planning ahead, residents knew that the one-room schools would eventually be replaced by bigger buildings and more of them.

By 1910, the schoolhouse sat abandoned at its original site on the east side of the Skagit River. Rescued in the early 1970s by a Valley historian and relocated across from Skagit Growers wholesale facility, where it was used for storage, the Christiansons had it moved to their nursery a couple of years ago. It has settled in nicely. Displaying the bell from a 1908 schoolhouse, it now plays host to gardening classes, with offerings ranging from planting fuchsia baskets to cooking with herbs. In the corner of the room is one of the original desks, a fact that Christianson sleuthed out after finding it in a local antique shop. He matched Nellie Lee's signature inside the desk to the 1891 photo of the school that included Lee among the students. Outside the schoolhouse are indications of a new garden going in; rose pillars dot the perimeter, and container shrubs sit waiting to be planted. "The garden will be

not unlike what we have done for the Flower & Garden show, but on a larger scale."

When 11 Wickersham Road won the People's Choice award at the 1997 show, knowledgeable gardeners knew that the setting—a celebration of a christening—was a reflection of the Christianson family as well as an inviting garden. Who would not want to be invited to a garden full of white lilacs, spiraea, and tulips and served coffee from a silver service?

Enchantment can be exhausting, and lately the Christiansons have taken a year off between displays at the show. As next year approaches, the talk is all about the turn of the century, and gardeners along with everyone else are tiring of the phrase, *The New Millennium*. What kind of nostalgic garden could be created from the theme for 1999: "Gardens of the Next Century"? Details are forthcoming, but it is certain that Toni and John Christianson will stick to the turn-of-the-century theme. "Our garden," assures Christianson with a smile, "will be from the 1890s."

Martha Polk Wingate is a freelance writer and editor. She is a member of the editorial board of the *Bulletin*, serving as taxonomic editor. Marty received a master's degree from the University of Washington's Center for Urban Horticulture and works in the Elisabeth Miller Horticultural Library.

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Magic in the Details

BY LAURIE LARSON

Details are critical to the garden. They establish mood, set style, and provide emotional cues to the users. Though details are often admired alone or for the effect, the underlying importance is to solve garden problems in a practical manner.

Basically, garden design is creative problem-solving; this is different than decorating the garden or using other means to make it attractive. Details must reflect functional solutions to site problems and client interests, so are critical to the successful completion of a garden design. The most effective details are simple, using materials selected for continuity in the garden. When a garden design reflects the client's or user's personal tastes and style, it can be considered a success.

The creation of magical details is the result of an involved design process.

The following two gardens were designed by our firm, Larson-Casteel. Each has interesting garden details incorporated to add to the functioning, as well as the beauty, of the landscape.

Windows to a garden's soul. The garden of Bethany and Kevin McDonald was created over the years and given changes inspired by a 1993 Northwest Flower & Garden Show display. The McDonalds' house, office, and cabinet-making workshop are close together, creating awkward spaces. The goal was to relate the buildings and create a common space to be used for employees during business hours and for entertainment spaces on evenings and weekends. We also wanted to provide privacy to the rest of the garden.

Bethany loved the Flower & Garden Show display, from which several things were appropriate here. We adapted the design for the site, using the garden show's trellis entry, Douglas-fir vine poles, and a 2 x 4-foot stud wall with floating wood pane window frames over window boxes.

The site is surrounded by larger Douglas-fir trees. The Douglas-fir vine poles create a strong

visual line from the workshop to the house's entry trellis, and they relate the second-growth trees, not only in scale but material.

The 2 x 4-foot stud walls with windows and window boxes were placed between the house and office. They integrate the small commercial buildings and the house by separating the back garden from the common space used by employees on weekdays and by the family of four at other times. Broken concrete was placed in the lawn to create what we call a soft patio for furniture.

Tropical flair. The tropical flair of Brazilian designer Roberto Burle Marx influenced one of our recent designs, displayed at the 1998 Northwest Flower & Garden Show. Details for the garden's tropical theme were designed with the Northwest environment in mind: rain, which must be addressed when designing a Northwest garden; gray skies; and native plants.

The most dramatic feature in this garden was the glass curtain—a piece of sculpture that was also a screen. The glass curtain also affects the mood, depending upon the weather. In sunlight, it creates shadow and diffused images; with rivulets of rain, it becomes a water feature.

As diverse as the Northwest weather is, there are microclimates conducive to growing some tropicals such as banana, palm, canna, and tree ferns. Although exotic flowers such as heliconia, wild ginger, and bird of paradise are not indigenous, they also can be used in the garden—in a vase placed on a mound of the rock that is so abundant in the Northwest. We anticipated the reactions to the glass curtain and flowers but never expected the positive response to the simple herringbone red brick path with its metal flashing edge. Such details add beauty, but serve a purpose as well.

Designing a garden begins by identifying a problem and its solution. At that point, details begin their evolution. Once done, this allows for opportunities to create magic.

Laurie Larson and partner Brad Pugh form the design firm of Larson-Casteel, based in Kingston, Washington. Brad was chief designer of Washington Park Arboretum's Japanese garden display in the 1998 Northwest Flower & Garden Show.



OPPOSITE PAGE: *Tropical flair.* Northwest Flower & Garden Show photo.
THIS PAGE: *The McDonald garden.* Laurie Larson photo.

Carpet of Bedding Plants

A Victorian Field of Dreams

BY BOB LILLY

The use of parterres—formal flower gardens—originated in the mid-1800s. They were started at the country homes of the English gentry. Until then, privately owned, park-like grounds had been created to reflect the look of an idealized countryside. Now head gardeners were charged to make their own mark. One result was parterres.

Parterres

Parterres could be small or large and might change from season to season, along with the social calendar and the availability of new plants; part of their purpose was to show off wealth and taste.

By the mid-1800s, parterre-makers had begun to use solid fields of color, some shaped geometrically. This sharpened the visual design and added bold contrast. Simplicity was the key: Heights were proportional to the beds, which were balanced rather than symmetrical.

Many of the great houses had terraces that viewed the parterres from different angles. Designs seen from the terraces became very elaborate and complex. These more intense patterned gardens became a showcase for plants, replacing the previous interest in estate gardens.

The parterre was assisted by new, longer-flowering annuals and tender plants, including zonal geraniums. By 1860, zonal geraniums came in whites, pinks, cherry, rose, salmon, and crimson, with foliage shades and variegation, as well.

From South Africa came purple, crimson, white, yellow, and orange new annuals as well as lobelias to add blue. Silver shades were also popular, obtained by using *Stachys lanata*, *Cineraria maritima* (now *Senecio cineraria*, the

common dusty miller), and *Cerastium tomentosum*, the versatile ground cover known as snow-in-summer.

Other elements of the parterre included formal boxwood hedges, gravel paths, and shaped shrubs, such as yew and beech. They were combined with the groupings of colors in very elaborate designs from the geometric to the curvilinear. Colored sands, gravels, and crushed shells were also popular by the 1850s.

Sometimes incorporated into the designs were the first letter of the last name of the family who owned the estate. Eventually came the simple designs we sometimes see, such as the civic clock in Golden Gate Park's carpet bedding.

Carpet Bedding

The term *carpet bedding* was first used in 1868 as a response to patterned gardens strictly of foliage. The use of *Alternanthera*, *Perilla*, *Coleus*, dwarf marigold, and the new alpinas, mossy saxifrages, and sedums and sempervivums provided hard edges and some practical advantages, not the least of which was immediate effect. If carefully maintained, these gave a long season from a single planting—usually into November, if no frosts appeared.

Northwesterners can produce effects from carpet bedding, even in winter. The design (opposite page) is so durable that its success depends only on foliage and a bit of early spring color, such as grape hyacinths.

As demonstrated by this bed design, the once-flat parterres can use carpet bedding to slope upwards to the center, and a specimen plant can be featured.

Designer Bob Lilly is a board member of The Arboretum Foundation.



Victorian Bedding~Out Plants

Armeria maritima(white-flowers)

Cineraria (Senecio) maritima

‘Silver Dust’

Dianthus deltoides

‘Flashing Lights’

Dianthus ‘Double Clove Pinks’

Lavandula angustifolia

Lavandula angustifolia

‘Munstead’

Lavandula x ‘Silver Leaf’

Muscari armeniacum

Santolina chamaecyparissus

var. *nana*

Saxifraga ‘Red Flowered’

Saxifraga ‘White Pixie’

Sedum album ‘Murale’

Sedum ‘Coral Carpet’

Sedum divergens

Sedum kamtschaticum

Sedum reflexum

Sedum sexangulare

Sedum spathulifolium

‘Cape Blanco’

Sedum spurium

‘Dragon's Blood’

Thymus x *citriodorus*

‘Golden Lemon’

Thymus x *citriodorus* ‘Variegatus’

Photo, courtesy Northwest Flower & Garden Show (David McDonald).
Plants, courtesy of Skagit Gardens and Thompson's Greenhouses



Swan~Keeping on the Bloedel Reserve

TEXT & PHOTOS BY RICHARD A. BROWN

“Gardens are for people.” So wrote Thomas Church, the noted western landscape architect, in his book whose title mimicked the same sentiment. Certainly, from my place within the Bloedel Reserve, it would be hard to dispute that thought. Near countless dollars and hours have been invested here in order to create a place where people may find peace and pleasure in the company of native and exotic plants.

Perhaps it is not surprising then that animals tend to be factored into the designs of gardens as afterthoughts or as decorations, if at all. So it was with us in the beginning.

Mute Swans on the Pond

When I came to the Reserve in 1976, I was not too surprised to see a mute swan pair on the pond west of the main residence. After all, swans have long been used as amenities at estates. So popular were mute swans in English gardens that owners were once required to mark their birds on



the feet or bills to indicate ownership. Unmarked birds, thus considered wild, became the property of the Queen.

In the years that soon followed, we lost mute swans to marauding dogs. For a while we had three—an old male (called a cob) and a new, young pair. The old cob was many years senior to the new pair, but he did not seem to interfere with them. After all, swans mate for life. Eventually, we lost the young cob to dogs, too.

It seems swans are not unlike people. At this stage, we had a young female (called a pen) and the old cob. After a reasonable passage of time, they bonded and produced cygnets. Mating for life often means “’til death do them part.”

We gave little thought to the matter of cygnets. Each spring, for several years, we witnessed anywhere from 3 to 6 new ones. Mute swan pens typically begin breeding at about 4 years old, although cases have been reported with birds as young as two. We watched these new birds grow and often witnessed their loss to crows, eagles, or unexplained drowning. Sometimes they just vanished. But occasionally one would reach maturity—at about the rate of survival (20%) here. In the wild, it has been reported that as much as 42% of eggs never hatch; for those that do, 9% are lost in the first week; about 50% can be expected to survive three months. One of the delightful memories I have was watching one of our adolescent swans depart our garden, flying just above our driveway, perhaps 8 feet above the ground. A swan in flight is an awesome sight; to see it close is an unforgettable event.

Creating a Place for Swans to Thrive

It was about this time, during the late 1970s, that we began to think about the implications of landscape construction and maintenance on Reserve wildlife. We started wondering about the impacts of major weeding projects, where large stands of plants were casually removed to suit our design purposes. Was it possible that other creatures needed these plants?

In 1979 we began planning for the feature that would become our Bird Refuge. Initially, the impetus was to expand the irrigation pond that Prentice Bloedel had constructed in 1954, providing water for his crops of young Douglas-

fir seedlings being annually planted in the field north and west of our entrance. We surmised that our need for irrigation water might, in the next ten years or so, be greater than at any other time. Expanding this pond would help solve this potential water problem. It also meant designing a new pond.

I like to think of this new pond project as the turning point in our thinking about wildlife and its role within the Reserve. We decided at the very start of planning for this feature that it would be designed to accommodate the needs of birds, particularly waterfowl, over and above issues of aesthetics. We even went so far as to engage the professional services of University of Washington Ornithologist Dr. Frank Richardson to counsel us about our ideas and the needs of birds.

From these planning discussions, a vision arose. We created islands for waterfowl to nest upon. We planted trees and shrubs that were known to be important sources of food for birds. We defined maintenance procedures that would keep some order to the area without necessarily eliminating cover and food sources. We began stocking the pond annually with trout as a food source for herons, osprey, and kingfishers. We minimized trails near the feature to ensure that there would always be portions of the new pond free from public access.

While that new pond slowly evolved, back in the center part of the Reserve we began to examine the role of our swans. With the loss of another mute swan to dogs, our inventory was down to one cob in 1985. As I explored sources for swans to replace our losses, I learned several things about mute swans. First, they were considered a deleterious species, which meant they could not be imported to this state. Second, it would be against state wildlife regulations for anyone to permit mute swan cygnets to fly free. We concluded that mute swans might not fit into our program any more.

A Call for Native Trumpeters

Instead of raising mute swans, we considered trumpeters, a native species that was long known to have threatened status. Could we do these swans a favor by hosting a pair here? Perhaps, in time, cygnets could be raised and released to augment the tender number known in the West. This might be one of those rare

synergistic opportunities.

After a reasonable effort, I found a local source for a non-sibling pair of one-year-old trumpeter swans. With permit in hand, we were the proud owners of a shy but beautiful set of new swans, still gray in color, as yearlings are. I was even lucky enough to find an individual willing to take over the responsibility of our lone mute male.

The trumpeters seemed comfortable, if not curious, about their new surroundings. For some reason, seeking seclusion perhaps, they kept hiking back to our new Bird Marsh feature—nearly a quarter-mile walk. How they knew it was there, I never determined. I was just thankful they never found a way to the beach. After marching them back to the central pond several times, we began to think that maybe the swans were right—maybe they belonged at the Bird Marsh. And so we gave them control of that feature, and they have been there ever since. A pair of Arctic tundra swans was later purchased to decorate the center of the garden, making us one of very few places where the public can witness both species of native swans.

The trumpeter swan is a marvelous creature. It is the largest North American waterfowl that can weigh up to 30 pounds or more. With nearly 8-foot wingspans, they can fly at speeds of almost 50 miles per hour. At one time, trumpeters were believed to have bred over most of North America—from Alaska and the Canadian Arctic to as far south as Florida and the Gulf of Mexico.

Unfortunately, during the 19th century, they were heavily hunted as a source of powder puffs made from their skins. The rate of loss in their numbers was staggering. Records from the Hudson's Bay Company—a major supplier of swan skins—indicated that between 1823 and 1880, they sold 108,000 skins in London. Between 1888 and 1897, that number dropped to 57 skins! According to Scott (1972), by 1932 there were only 69 trumpeter swans left in the 48 States. Up until 1954, trumpeters in Alaska went essentially unnoticed. In fact, it was not until 1968 that a large-scale survey was conducted which found nearly 3,000 birds. This was a big enough boost to reduce the status of trumpeter swans from endangered to threatened. In 1975, another census found 4,170 and in 1980, 7696 swans. Today the

number of trumpeter swans varies between 8,000 and 10,000 birds. Plus, there is our pair.

Trumpeter swans, like mute swans, usually start raising young at about four years of age. Ours took eight; everything we do just takes longer. On June 12, 1993, three cygnets hatched, but a week later only one was left. It was about this time, as we fantasized about our cygnet one day flying free, that we learned it would be a violation of state game laws to release our bird. Not only that, it would likely die—it would not know where to migrate to or how to join up with other birds. Finding food would not be easy, either.

Far-Reaching Restoration of a Resource

Because swans are very territorial, we knew that if we did not do something with our cygnet, the adults would likely chase it off at nesting time. Enter the Trumpeter Swan Society. After a series of conversations with representatives of this international organization, we learned that in other parts of the country, there was a need for trumpeter swan cygnets to be used in release programs intended to restore historic flyways of this once common bird, now threatened but making a comeback.

Since the inception of our participation with the Trumpeter Swan Society in restoration efforts in 1993, we have donated 14 cygnets. All but one have gone to the State Department of Natural Resources in Des Moines, Iowa. We have been advised that there is a chance that this year—1998—will see the first natural nesting of trumpeter swans in Iowa since 1883! We would like to think that the Bloedel Reserve is playing a part in that comeback effort.

Richard A. Brown is Executive Director of the Bloedel Reserve, Bainbridge Island, Washington.

More Reading

Scott, Peter. *The Swans*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972.

Hansen, Skylar. *The Trumpeter Swan: A White Perfection*. Northland Press, 1984.



Scents & Scents-ibility

TEXT BY SCOTT WOODCOCK & TOM BERGER

PHOTO BY TOM BERGER

It has been said that our sense of smell is one of the most powerful of the five in evoking memories. We all have our own version of this phenomenon—Grandma's attic, late summer hay, low tide, a Midwest electrical storm. With little doubt, a host of scientific explanations account for this, but it does not matter; these memories are visceral and tangible. They are time and place. They are home.

(continued, next page)

Can the garden be very far from home? Are the olfactory memories that contribute to the layers of our lives already planted, waiting only to be scratched and sniffed?

Certainly, plants stimulate our sense of smell. But it can be far more complicated, and ever so much more enriching than that. Sources of scent are generated in every facet of the garden and affect the color and hue of each memory to which they connect.

What follows is a tour through the scents and the seasons of gardens, every one of them connecting time and place.

Spring

The smell of lilacs signifies longer days and courting birds. Is it possible to resist snapping off a cluster to bring inside? Certainly spring has its intoxicating standards in lilacs, *Osmanthus*, *Viburnum carlesii*, *Daphne x burkwoodii*, and the first roses. These fragrances are inextricably bound to the times and places in which we encountered them. Where does the subtle perfume of a tulip take you? Whose garden were you in when dianthus first made you notice that imprinting scent?

But spring also brings the scent of cottonwood, spring soil, the cutting of seed potatoes, the pungent smell of steamed bone meal, spring lawn fertilizer, and for those who use it, the distinct Diazanon blast and its reminder of cabbage maggots.

Indeed, the very act of gardening brings us into contact with smells that, while not necessarily pleasant, still have an evocative power. Turning soil has an unmistakable smell; the manure and active compost even more so.

We are never closer to the scent of the flowers than when we cut a fresh bouquet. Not really known for fragrance, daffodils have one that is most subtle and pleasing. And unless you stroll through your garden in the evenings, you might miss the pungency of night-blooming *Daphne laureola*.

As we settle into spring chores of soil preparation, garden clean-up and, yes, weeding, the activity sparks seasonal reminders of the pulling of herb Robert. What a pretty little flower; but the stems and foliage remind us to wear gloves and breathe shallow when removing this pernicious (acid) weed.

We cannot forget that which promises a fruitful and colorful summer—the purchase of

garden seeds. It is remarkable that for what they create, very few seeds have any smell, odor, or fragrance. Perhaps this is nature's way of protecting them, assuring a new spring crop by making the seeds odorless, innocuous, and on occasion, toxic.

There is no mistaking, though: Spring scent is explosive and kinetic—it is vibrant, it penetrates. It is moist and exuberant. Spring scent is like spring itself.

Summer

Summer also has its standards, such as the great fragrances of the roses punctuating the slow, heavy air of long days and the first of the Asian lilies, the ever-present marigold, sweet allysum, geranium, and snapdragons. Add to this the eager growth of herbs such as rosemary, sage, basil, mint, dill, and fennel, and vegetables such as tomatoes, beans, and cucumbers. It's vegetable stew!

But the first flower of the incredible sweet pea and the petunias of summer, with their heavy, almost visible fragrance, are what really lock down this season. Freshly mowed lawn (is that what chlorophyll smells like?) and the damp air of the evening watering cycle are almost as comforting as an old Adirondacks chair. Sunset never smelled this good.

As the dog days approach, even the now-hardened foliage of the rhododendron, such as *R. augustinii*, *R. 'Ilam's Violet'*, and *R. minus* have an herb-like fragrance. Heat seems to unlock the smell of summer—the hotter it gets, the more *R. occidentale* fills a courtyard. The warmer the southern exposure, the more honeysuckle demands your olfactory attention. Raspberries, boysenberries, and loganberries. Finally, that lovely urban fruit, the blackberries.

Fall

Fall fragrance is more anonymous; it is ambient and less point source. It is squash and pumpkin and harvest and split wood. It is on the air and smells like rattling leaves. But a few hardy types still splash the air with fall fumes such as *Choisya ternata* and maybe *Nicotiana*. Who knows, maybe *Daphne cneorum* will go off again around this time. But when close to the ground it is the mushrooms, *Armillaria ponderosa* (pine mushroom), the *Agaricus campestris* (meadow mushroom), and especially the *Chanterelles cantharellus*. There are still

those persistent jack-o'-lanterns of late October and the smell of zucchini bread and baked squash.

Fall smells like mud on your boots and the ripe grape you just stepped on.

Winter

Hamamelis, *Sarcococca*, and *Viburnum x bodnantense* are a few of the usual suspects for winter fragrance. And what a treat they are, whether inside or out, in reminding us that our garden is far from dormant.

Also add *Chimonanthus praecox* or *Lonicera standishii* or *Camellia sasanqua*. These winter bloomers have a fragrance and a presence that strikes a remarkable contrast between romance and reality; who ever heard of being swept off your feet by the tantalizing perfume of winter-blooming honeysuckle—in a driving rain and 30 mile per hour wind gusts?

And then there are the smells that are unlocked by our interaction with the garden. If you prune *Clerodendrum trichotomum*

(harlequin glorybower) in the dead of winter it smells like fresh peanut butter. And there is nothing more refreshing than a crushed wintergreen leaf (*Gaultheria procumbens*) to bring a look of wonder and surprise. The lemon oil of all the magnolias and the woody perfume of incense cedar, juniper, and the true firs are all activated by winter pruning.

The point is more to broaden the perception of what “garden” is and what “garden” does, and to perhaps give you pause. Fundamentally, that is what fragrance does, too—makes you pause and engages your environment with an added dimension. And yes, most of us garden for fun. But the simple fact is how meaningfully it connects us in time and place.

So, wherever you are when the synapses fire off an olfactory message, stop and smell the roses—no, smell everything—again.

Scott Woodcock and Tom Berger are principals of The Berger Partnership, landscape architects, Seattle, Washington.

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For Further Information

Gardens of the Heart & Imagination

BY VALERIE EASTON

PHOTO: *The McVay Courtyard, Center for Urban Horticulture. Miller Library, right.*

I'm a little confused by the concept of fantasy gardens—does it just mean the extraordinary, overblown laden-with-tropical-effects gardens that the term is so often used to describe? Is it otherworldly, nearly beyond the realm of the imagination, like the best fantasy writing? Perhaps an Ursula LeGuinn novel transformed into cannas and bananas.

I'd rather think of fantasy as a term that gets to the heart of garden-making; the garden-creator's special effects that make his or her own garden a reflection of individual taste and spirit.

This list of titles explores a variety of ideas for creating unusual, sensual, and rewarding gardens. What point is there in working on any other kind?

Gardner, Theodore Roosevelt II. *Lotusland: A Photographic Odyssey*. Santa Barbara, CA: Allen A. Knoll Publishers, 1997. To extend the metaphor, Lotusland is C. S. Lewis, Ursula LeGuinn, and J. R. R. Tolkien as manifested in plants. Madame Ganna Walska, a Polish opera singer with six husbands over a 28-year span, spent millions of dollars and over 40 years creating a flamboyant, fantastical garden nestled among the hills of Santa Barbara. Lotus, palms, an array of bizarre cactus, and a theatre garden populated with concrete grotesques are just a few elements of this eclectic, personal, and unique work of art.

Bryan, Felicity. *A Garden for Children*. London: Michael Joseph Ltd., 1986. Children create a world of their own with very little in

the way of materials—a blanket over a card table makes a fort, a fallen log provides a cave.

The endless possibilities supplied by the garden are explored in this beautifully illustrated book for both kids and adults. From simply adding some private corners or mysteriously curving pathways to creating a magician's garden, a nature reserve, or a miniature garden, Bryan's ideas add games, delight, and adventure to the garden.

Challis, Myles. *Exotic Gardening in Cool Climates*. London: Fourth Estate Ltd., 1994. Both a treatise on why to consider gardening with hardy exotics and a manual on how to accomplish this feat, Challis's book is certainly the most complete of guides. Each color photo is one full page showing plants such as the lush *Datura cornigera* with its creamy drooping bells, the bold burgundy leaves of *Ricinus communis* 'Gibsonii', black bamboo, phormiums, and the glaucous leaves of *Melianthus major* consorting with the dark unfurling sheaves of *Canna generalis* 'Wyoming'. Line drawings show the shape and form of an impressive range of plants including trees, shrubs, herbaceous plants, bamboo, climbers, and the tender exotics. Challis, an instigator in the British movement known as the "exoticists," writes knowledgeably about the history of exotic gardening, the use of water to further the tropical effect, and how to care for the array of plants he champions.

Freelance writer Valerie Easton is library manager of the Elisabeth C. Miller Library, Seattle.

More Reading

- Bar-Zvi, David. *Fairchild Tropical Garden. Tropical Gardening*. The American Garden Guides. New York: Pantheon Books, 1996.
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- Kingsbury, Noel. *Dramatic Effects with Architectural Plants*. Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 1997.
- Lacey, Stephen. *Scent in Your Garden*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1991.
- Minter, Sue. *The Healing Garden: A Natural Haven for Body, Senses and Spirit*. Boston: Charles E. Tuttle, 1993.
- Oehme, Wolfgang, and James van Sweden. *Bold Romantic Gardens*. Reston, VA: Acropolis Books Ltd., 1990.
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Perennial Ground Covers

David S. MacKenzie. Portland, OR: Timber Press, 1997. 315 color photos. Hard cover, \$49.95.

Ground cover: This term often implies the mundane, and much like seat cover, conveys no excitement. However, David MacKenzie's comprehensive text, *Perennial Ground Covers*, takes a comprehensive look and covers not just the ground but a remarkably broad range of plants.

MacKenzie, who manages a production nursery, brings considerable experience to this beautifully produced book, which is a substantial expansion and rewrite of his *Complete Manual of Perennial Ground Covers* (NY: Prentice Hall, 1989). He writes clearly and with fearless opinion.

The book broadens plant knowledge and stretches ideas of what can be considered a ground cover. The author's approach challenges preconceptions. Here, he includes woody plants, vining plants, hardy herbaceous perennials, and tender tropical plants. It probably would not have occurred to anyone to consider the common hanging-basket spiderwort (*Tradescantia flumeninensis*) as a ground cover in tropical areas. He does. He also suggests that "The lush, rich appearance of caladium imparts style and tranquility to the landscape like no other plant." He has apparently grown and observed many of these plants, which helps his descriptive powers.

The text also gains usefulness when compared with a general encyclopedia of plant materials. It is organized alphabetically by

botanical name, with each of 315 plants illustrated in clear, color photos at the front of the text. To see both the plant and its description requires flipping pages. For example, to choose plants for moist shade in a zone 7 location, it is necessary to refer further to a chart at the end of the descriptions and sort through the alphabet again, taking notes as you go.

The best part of the book is the detailed plant essays. Plant descriptions are fresh and intriguing. The information on "rate of spread" is seldom found. Also find lists of horticultural selections, such as 13 cultivars of *Geranium macrorrhizum*.

The book requires some patience if needed for solving a particular landscape problem. Graham Stuart Thomas, in his invaluable *Plants for Ground Cover* (1970), asserts there are two necessary characteristics to ground covers: density and weed-proofness. MacKenzie takes a less-defined position. His definition of perennial does not necessarily imply evergreen, which is a valued component of ground covers for many Northwest gardeners whose gardens are active all year (including contention with winter weeds). For this reason, the reader must entirely decide whether a plant that disappears in the winter will work as a ground cover in a particular local garden situation. Looking over MacKenzie's book will certainly provide a myriad of possibilities.—Reviewed by Mary Robson

Mary Robson is the extension agent for King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties.



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